AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of removing contamination from a Fischer-Tropsch derived hydrocarbon stream, the method comprising:

    a) filtering a Fischer-Tropsch derived hydrocarbon stream with a conventional filter to remove contamination having an average size greater than or equal to about 1 micron to produce a filtered hydrocarbon stream;

    b) passing the filtered hydrocarbon stream to ~~at least one distillation step to~~ a first distillation step and a second distillation step, the first distillation step producing a first overhead stream and a first bottoms stream, and the second distillation step producing a second overhead stream and a second bottoms stream, wherein the first and second distillation steps remove contamination present as soluble species or as ultra-fine particulate from the filtered hydrocarbon stream, ~~the distillation step producing a distillate product stream and a bottoms fraction,~~ wherein the contamination is substantially concentrated in the second bottoms fraction; and

    c) recovering the bottoms fraction from the second distillation step, wherein the amount of the bottoms fraction is less than about 35 percent by volume of the filtered hydrocarbon stream.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the amount of the bottoms fraction is less than about 15 percent by volume of the filtered hydrocarbon stream.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the distillation step is carried out in a vacuum distillation column.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the contamination is derived from a Fischer-Tropsch catalyst.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the distillate step removes soluble contamination from the Fischer-Tropsch derived hydrocarbon, the soluble contamination being derived from a Fischer-Tropsch catalyst.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the soluble contamination comprises a material selected from the group consisting of aluminum, cobalt, titanium and iron.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least about 70 percent by weight of the contamination present in the filtered hydrocarbon stream is isolated in the bottoms fraction.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least about 85 percent by weight of the contamination present in the filtered hydrocarbon stream is isolated in the bottoms fraction.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the Fischer-Tropsch derived hydrocarbon stream is a C_{3+} product.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further including passing the distillate product stream to a hydroprocessing reactor having a hydroprocessing catalyst.

13.   (Cancelled)

14.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, wherein the first overhead stream has a range of boiling points less than about 800 to 950°F, and the first bottoms stream has a range of boiling points greater than about 800 to 950°F.

15.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, wherein the first overhead stream is passed to the hydroprocessing reactor, and the first bottoms stream is passed to the second distillation step.

16.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, wherein the second distillation step comprises a vacuum distillation, and the second bottoms stream has an initial boiling point of greater than about 1000°F.

17.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, wherein the second overhead stream is passed to the hydroprocessing reactor.

18.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, wherein the second bottoms stream is less than about 15 percent by volume of the Fischer-Tropsch derived hydrocarbon stream.

19.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1, further including the step of treating the second bottoms stream with a treatment selected from the group consisting of dispensing the second bottoms stream in crude oil, passing the second bottoms stream to a third distillation step, processing the second bottoms stream into a fuel, and recycling the second bottoms stream in a recycling operation.